



National Park Service Assateague Island National Seashore

GENERAL HUNTING REGULATIONS 2003-2004



Public hunting within the boundaries of Assateague Island National Seashore is recognized as a recreational activity and is required in the legislation that established the National Seashore (Public Law 89-195). The regulations for hunting within Assateague Island National Seashore are designed to provide a meaningful and safe experience for hunters.

State laws governing the public areas of Maryland and Federal Regulations (Title 36 CFR) apply to both the lands and the waters within the boundaries of the National Seashore. Hunting is legal only in specifically designated areas of the National Seashore.

Hunters are responsible for knowing and complying with the State and Federal regulations that apply within the boundaries of Assateague Island National Seashore.

Licenses and Stamps

A valid State of Maryland hunting license is required for each hunter. All waterfowl hunters, 16 years of age or older, are also required to carry a signed Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. A Maryland Migratory Waterfowl Stamp is required for all migratory game bird hunters. Hunters are no longer required to sign and attach this stamp to their license. If hunters do not sign and attach this stamp to their license they must possess the printed receipt showing proof of purchase of the stamp while hunting migratory game birds.

Hunter Registration

All hunters are required to sign in (register) and sign out at the Ranger Station each time they enter or leave the hunting zone. When the Ranger Station is not open during deer and upland game seasons, a registration box is located outside of the office for this purpose. Waterfowl hunters must register during Ranger Station operational hours. All game taken must be checked at the Ranger Station. **All hunters must be checked out no later than one and one-half hours after official sunset.**

Entrance Fees

Park entrance fees are collected year round and can be paid at the Ranger Station. A seven-day vehicle pass is \$10.00. Annual passes are available for \$20.00 and are valid for a calendar year. Golden Age and Golden Access Passports are also available at the Ranger Station. Current Federal Duck Stamps are honored as a valid Entrance Pass. For additional information inquire at the Ranger Station.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Permits

Some hunting zones are accessible from developed roads or by boat. However, most areas open to hunting are accessible only by off-road vehicle (ORV). An ORV permit is required in the Off-Road Vehicle Zone and special equipment is required before a permit will be issued. ORV permits are \$70.00 per vehicle and are valid for 12 months. Permits may be purchased at the Ranger Station between 9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. daily, or by mail. At certain times during storms, beach flooding, and emergencies, the ORV Zone may be closed to all public use. Contact the Ranger Station for additional information about ORV use on Assateague Island National Seashore.

Location Marking System

In the Hunting Zone, a reflective decal number will be on 4-inch PVC pipes placed in line with the ORV corridor boundary posts. The entrance to the ORV Zone is located at km 16. ORV bay access roads, seasonal hunting roads and parking areas will also be assigned a corresponding number. White posts marking the boundary of travel corridors will be topped in reflective black tape, while posts denoting the location of off-beach travel routes will be topped in reflective orange.

How to Contact Us

Assateague Island National Seashore
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www.nps.gov/asis

Michael O. Hill, Superintendent:

DEER AND UPLAND GAME REGULATIONS

| Species | Type of Season | Dates | Season Bag Limit |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Whitetail Deer | CLOSED | CLOSED | CLOSED |
| Sika | Archery (Vertical Bow) | Sept. 15 – Jan. 31 | Four* |
| Sika | Archery (Crossbow) | Oct. 1 - Oct. 15 Jan. 15 - Jan. 31 | Four*/** |
| Sika | Muzzleloader | Oct. 14 – Oct. 20 | Two* |
| Sika | Shotgun/Muzzleloader | Nov. 29 – Dec. 13 | Four* |
| Junior Sika Hunt (Hunters age 16 or younger only; must be accompanied by a licensed unarmed adult age 21 or older) | Shotgun | Nov. 15 | One |

* **It is required that one of the first two deer harvested under the bag limit for each exclusive season must be an antlerless deer.** Season takes are exclusive - an antlerless deer harvested during the early archery or muzzleloader hunt does not permit a shotgun hunter to attempt to initially harvest two stags. The bag limit during muzzleloading season is two Sika deer, therefore, at least one of the two deer taken must be antlerless.

** Deer harvested by crossbow counts towards a hunter's vertical bow season bag limit.

Shooting Hours

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before official sunrise to one-half hour after official sunset.

The following are PROHIBITED:

- ◆ Construction or use of any permanent tree stands or blinds. (Hunters may use portable hunting stands that do not damage the tree provided that they are removed at the end of each hunting day.)
- ◆ Use of "screw in" steps.
- ◆ Damage to any vegetation. This includes cutting, thinning, pruning, or removal of any vegetation.
- ◆ Driving deer by any means.
- ◆ Hunting with handguns of any kind. Muzzleloading handguns are NOT permitted during muzzleloader season.
- ◆ Use of dogs while hunting deer.
- ◆ Hunting within 300 yards of a waterfowl blind or a waterfowl hunter during the waterfowl season.
- ◆ The use of shotguns larger than 10 gauge or smaller than 20 gauge.
- ◆ Use or possession of buckshot.
- ◆ Possession of a firearm while hunting with either a vertical bow or crossbow.
- ◆ Baiting of any type.
- ◆ Possession of an uncased weapon outside of any hunting zone. When exiting any hunting zone, weapons MUST be unloaded (including the magazine) and rendered temporarily inoperable, stored, packed, or cased to prevent their ready use.
- ◆ Discharge of a weapon for other than a hunting purpose, except for making a muzzleloader safe at the end of an unsuccessful hunt.
- ◆ Failure to report to the ranger station all wounded animals (deer) is prohibited. Hunters are required to make a concerted effort in locating (tracking) wounded game.
- ◆ Wanton waste is prohibited.
- ◆ Use or possession of alcoholic beverages is prohibited while hunting.

Fluorescent Orange Requirements

In accordance with Maryland State law, any person on Assateague Island National Seashore who hunts wildlife or who accompanies, aids, or assists another person hunting such game during the muzzleloader and shotgun seasons is required to wear fluorescent orange. The garment must be a cap of solid daylight fluorescent orange color **or** a vest or jacket containing front and back panels of at least a minimum total of 250 square inches of solid fluorescent orange color **or** an outer garment of camouflage fluorescent orange worn above the waist which contains at least 50% fluorescent orange color. **ALL hunters, including archery hunters, must wear the required fluorescent orange during the muzzleloader and shotgun seasons when hunting in the muzzleloader and shotgun areas. This includes November 15th during the Junior Sika Hunt.**

Hunter Limits During Sika Deer Shotgun Season

Due to potential safety problems and overcrowding, the National Park Service (NPS) limits the number of deer hunters permitted in the hunting zone at any one time to 140. After this limit is reached, hunters will be admitted to the hunting area on a one-off one-on basis. This limit is expected to affect only those hunters arriving on the morning of the opening day of shotgun season. Those wishing to experience less crowded hunting conditions may wish to hunt later in the week.

Field Tags

In accordance with Maryland State law, a field tag must be filled out and attached to the deer **before** moving it from place of kill. Field tags are provided in the "Hunting & Trapping In Maryland 2003-2004" booklet. In cases where a hunter does not need a hunting license or stamp or is in need of field tags, the hunter must make a tag which includes the hunter's name, license number (if applicable), date, and the park's management unit number where the deer was taken. The carcass may be field dressed but the head and the hide may not be removed nor the meat cut up into parts until the animal has been checked at the ranger station.

A "Big Game Possession Tag" will be provided to the hunter when they check the deer at the ranger station. The possession tag is proof that they legally acquired the deer and any meat, head, hide, or antlers, from the deer. The possession tag must be kept with the meat and any deer parts until they are consumed or disposed of properly.

Muzzleloader Season

Muzzleloader season on Assateague Island is for Sika deer only and the dates are **NOT** the same as for the State of Maryland. Muzzleloaders must be at least .40 caliber in size and use not less than 60 grains of black powder or a black powder equivalent and propel one all-lead, lead alloy or copper soft-nosed or expanding bullet or ball at a single discharge. The use of Sabot loads and telescopic sights are permitted. Both flintlock and percussion cap muzzleloaders including inline ignition models are legal hunting devices.

Crossbow Season

The use of crossbows for hunting Sika deer only will be permitted in two separate hunting seasons. Crossbow must have a draw of at least 75 pounds. Arrows must have a sharpened broad head with metal cutting surface having a minimum width of 7/8 of an inch. The use of telescopic sights is permitted. When not in use crossbows must be cased with the action undrawn. Hunters aged 65 years and older or those who possess a Resident Senior Hunting License can hunt Sika Deer with a crossbow in all Sika deer hunting seasons. Hunters with physical disabilities that prevent them from using a traditional bow may apply for a special crossbow permit through Maryland's Department of Natural Resources in order to hunt deer during the bow season.

Arrow Identification

Bow and crossbow hunters must label their arrows with their name, prior to hunting with them in the National Seashore.

Upland Game and Webless Migratory Bird Regulations

| Species | Open Season | Bag Limit (Possession limit same as bag limit) |
|--|---|---|
| Eastern Cottontail Rabbit | Nov. 1 – Jan. 31 | 4 |
| Quail | Nov. 1 – Jan. 31 | 6 |
| Mourning Dove | Sept. 15 – Oct. 18 Nov. 10 – Nov. 15 Dec. 20 – Jan. 3 | 12 |
| Fox | Nov. 15 – Jan. 15 | No Limit |
| Crow, Woodcock, Clapper and King Rails, Sora and Virginia Rails, Common Snipe | Closed | Closed |

Shooting Hours for Upland Game

One half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset.

Other Upland Game Regulations

- ♦ Hunters may only hunt upland game with a shotgun or bow. (Muzzleloaders, handguns and rifles are prohibited.)
- ♦ Hunters must wear fluorescent orange when hunting upland game (see page two).

- ◆ Hunting by falconry is prohibited due to ongoing studies of migratory falcons on Assateague Island.
- ◆ Hunting within 300 yards of any waterfowl blind or waterfowl hunter is prohibited during waterfowl season.
- ◆ Use or possession of buckshot is prohibited.
- ◆ Trapping game on Assateague Island National Seashore is prohibited.
- ◆ Trained hunting dogs may be used to hunt upland game, provided they are leashed elsewhere in the park.

Fox

Fox may only be hunted from official sunrise to official sunset. Hunting fox with the aid of dogs and electronic calling devices is prohibited. Trapping of fox is prohibited. The unarmed chasing of fox for sport is prohibited.

Hunting Areas for Upland Game and Sika Deer

The attached hunting maps show the designated upland game and deer hunting zones. The shaded crosshatching on the maps delineates "safety" and "no hunting" areas. Public hunting is prohibited in all the shaded crosshatched areas. Legal hunting areas are as follows:

Northern Boundary: The northern boundary of the Sika deer and upland game hunting zone is the east-west "double-track" trail located south of the "Life of the Dunes Trail." It is marked with "No Hunting" Signs. Hunting is permitted south of this line.

Southern Boundary: The southern boundary is the Maryland-Virginia State Line. A beach-to-bay fence line delineates the boundary.

Eastern Boundary: The white markers on the beach east of the primary dunes define the eastern boundary. These white markers also indicate the western limits of the Off-Road Vehicle Zone. Hunters may not hunt east (ocean side) of these markers. ORV users may not drive west (bayside) of these markers, except at designated crossings. Parking west of these markers is prohibited unless it is in a designated parking area.

Restrictive Project Areas

Hunters are prohibited from interfering with scientific research within the Seashore. All fenced or posted areas, bay tide gauge stations, bayside SAV buoys, and areas marked with 'study site' posts are not to be disturbed. Annual nighttime mist-netting and recorded calling for Saw-Whet owls will continue. A study on Bayberry seed dispersal by birds will require daytime mist-netting, and a grid of fiberglass 'cafeteria' trays on the ground to catch droppings. Hunters should avoid alteration of nets or trays.

Disease Alerts

Hunters are reminded that several wildlife diseases with potential impacts to humans could be contracted on Assateague. Lyme disease is transmitted by the Deer tick that is present in all vegetated areas of the island, particularly along deer and horse trails. The Salt Marsh mosquito is capable of transmitting Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and the Fresh Marsh mosquito can transmit West Nile virus. Hunters can reduce the potential exposure to these three diseases through the use of insect repellants and daily body checks for embedded ticks. Rabies is also present in the county, so hunters should avoid bare-handed contact with raccoons, fox and other mammals.

2003-2004 PUBLIC BLIND WATERFOWL SEASON

Ducks, Mergansers and Coots

| Species | Season Dates | Bag Limit |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Ducks* | Oct. 25 – Nov. 1 Nov. 8 – Nov. 28 Dec. 16 – Jan. 24 | See Duck Daily Bag Limit* |
| Black Duck | Nov. 8 – Nov. 28 Dec. 16 – Jan. 24 | One |
| Pintail | Oct. 25 – Nov. 1 Dec. 30 – Jan. 24 | One |
| Canvasback | Dec. 22 - Jan. 24 | One |
| Junior Waterfowl Day | Oct. 11 | See Duck Daily Bag Limit * (Plus 1 Canada Goose) |

***Duck Daily Bag Limits**

5 ducks per day which may include no more than: 4 Mallards (max. 2 hen Mallards), 2 Wood ducks, 2 Redheads, 3 Scaup, 4 Scoters, 1 Fulvous tree duck, 1 Pintail (during pintail season), 1 Mottled duck, 1 Black duck (during open season for Black ducks) and 1 canvasback (during canvasback season). During all three duck season splits, hunters may take 1 additional Teal (either Blue Winged or Green Winged Teal). The possession limit is twice the daily bag limit. **Closed season for Harlequin.** In addition to the duck bag limit hunters may take 15 coot and 6 Mergansers per day, which may include not more than one Hooded Merganser. Hunters at Assateague Island National Seashore should possess no more than the daily bag limit unless registered to camp overnight, then they may possess twice the daily bag limit in aggregate.

Junior Waterfowl Hunting Day

Licensed hunters 15 and under must be accompanied by a licensed (or exempt from license requirement), unarmed adult age 21 or older.

Sea Ducks, Geese and Brant

| Species | Season Dates | Bag Limit |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Sea Ducks (Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, and Eiders) | Oct. 4 – Nov. 28 Dec. 1 - Jan. 24 | 5 per day (no more than 4 Scoters) |
| Canada Geese (Atlantic Population) | Nov. 15 – Nov. 28 Dec. 18 – Jan. 24 | 1 per day |
| Atlantic Brant | Nov. 8 – Nov. 28 Dec. 3 – Jan. 20 | 3 per day |
| Greater Snow Geese | Oct. 18 – Nov. 28 Dec. 6 – Jan. 31 | 15 per day (no possession limit) |
| Tundra Swan | SEASON CLOSED | SEASON CLOSED |

Waterfowl Shooting Hours

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before official sunrise to official sunset.

Hunting Areas

Some constructed blinds have been removed and replaced by markers to delineate "hunting areas" to allow waterfowl hunters the use of portable blinds and anchored boats. Hunting areas will be identified by numbered post in each particular zone. Hunters **MUST hunt within 100 yards** of the marked post. Hunters must hunt from a stationary position and may not walk hunt in their assigned area. Rangers can provide information regarding the type of blind site or hunting areas. Hunters unfamiliar with Assateague Island National Seashore, or the changes to the waterfowl program, should obtain information from the ranger station prior to beginning their hunt.

Assignment of Blind Sites

Hunters must register for all blinds and hunting areas in person at the Ranger Station. A daily random drawing for waterfowl sites is held at 5:00 a.m. each morning. Hunters should not arrive before 4:30 a.m. All hunters signed in before 5:00 a.m. can participate in the drawing; however, hunters are NOT guaranteed a site in which to hunt. Depending on the number of hunters participating in the drawing, there may be times when there are more hunters than available sites. Hunters not drawing a site may be turned away until a site is vacated.

If any sites are available following the morning drawing, the remaining sites will be assigned on a first-come first-served basis. Individuals wanting boat-in sites who choose not to participate in the morning draw may register for vacant boat-in sites by phone. Hunters should call (410) 641-3030 at 5:15 a.m. or after 9:00 a.m. to register for boat-in sites.

Hunter Registration

Waterfowl hunters and any observers accompanying hunters MUST register at the Ranger Station before entering the hunting zone. Groups in blinds are limited to a maximum of three hunters and one gun per hunter. There may be no more than three people total in any blind or hunting area. An exception exists for the physically challenged blind. Contact ranger station for details.

Hunters MUST check-out in person at the Ranger Station. Hunters registered for boat-in blinds are required to checkout by phone as soon as possible after vacating a site. Hunters must report any wildlife taken. Failure to properly checkout of sites or report any wildlife taken may result in restricted or revoked hunting privileges, and/or fines.

Temporary Blinds

Same-day set up and removal of temporary (portable) blinds is permitted in designated hunting areas. Portable blinds or blind materials brought into Assateague Island National Seashore MUST NOT contain any forms of live or dead vegetation. Camouflage cloth or material is recommended. The use of common reed (*Phragmites australis*) is prohibited.

Accessible Blind for the Physically Challenged

The National Seashore maintains one blind (Blind "A") for hunters with physical challenges. This blind may be reserved in advance by calling (410) 641-3030. Hunters with physical challenges may reserve the blind for a maximum of four days total per person during waterfowl season. Hunters with physician verification of physical challenges have priority access to the blind. The National Park Service reserves the right to cancel any reservation made for this blind by a hunter who cannot provide written verification of a disability. Written verification must be from the hunter's primary care physician. It is recommended that all hunters using this blind be accompanied by hunting partners. Contact the Ranger Station for additional information.

Waterfowl Hunting Regulations

- ◆ **Waterfowl shall be hunted only from numbered NPS-owned blinds, numbered hunting areas or boat-in blinds.**
- ◆ Nontoxic shot is required for waterfowl and coot hunting. Possession of lead shot is prohibited.
- ◆ Migratory game birds may not be taken with a shotgun capable of holding more than 3 shells.
- ◆ Shotguns larger than 10 gauge are prohibited.
- ◆ Trained dogs are permitted for waterfowl retrieval provided they are leashed elsewhere in the park.
- ◆ Weapons possessed outside of designated hunting zones must be unloaded and packed, cased, stored, or rendered temporarily inoperable as to prevent ready use.
- ◆ Walk hunting to drive or "kick-up" waterfowl is prohibited.
- ◆ No firearms shall be discharged from outside a blind or hunting zone unless the hunter is actively attempting to retrieve downed and crippled waterfowl.
- ◆ Parties in blinds are limited to 3 persons and 1 shotgun per hunter.
- ◆ Hunters shall not enter the public waterfowl hunting area more than one hour before legal shooting time and shall be out of the blind or area 30 minutes after the close of legal shooting time.
- ◆ Hunters shall remove spent shells from the blind or hunting areas.
- ◆ Hunters using NPS-owned blinds or areas shall enter and leave the hunting area via designated routes on the island.
- ◆ The leaving of decoys or equipment at a blind site for the purpose of holding occupancy is prohibited.
- ◆ Hunters may take, in any one day, only the bag limit established for each species.
- ◆ The head or one fully feathered wing must remain attached to all birds while being transported.
- ◆ The use of recordings of migratory game bird calls and sounds or electronically amplified imitations of birdcalls is prohibited.
- ◆ The use or aid of live decoys is prohibited.
- ◆ The cutting, damaging, destruction, removal, or pruning of any vegetation on Assateague Island is strictly prohibited.

- ◆ Alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances are prohibited in any NPS-owned blind or hunting area.
- ◆ Hunting under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substances is strictly prohibited.

State of Maryland Hunting regulations apply within the National Seashore. For additional information see "Hunting and Trapping in Maryland 2003-2004" and/or the State of Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources website at www.dnr.state.md.us